

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Resource Summary

(\$ in thousands)

Appropriations	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
Positions	8	8	8	0
Funds	1,518	1,970	2,385	415

FY 2008 Actual reflects the rescission of 0.81% provided by the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110-161, Division J).

Overview

The primary mission of the International Boundary Commission (IBC) is to maintain an “effective” (cleared and well-marked) boundary between the United States and Canada as prescribed by the 1925 Treaty of Washington. In recent years, the IBC has modified its mission to more effectively support the Department’s Strategic goals of Regional Stability and Homeland Security. To achieve its mission the IBC has established a maintenance schedule for the entire U.S.-Canadian boundary (5,525 mile) as the primary performance measure of the effectiveness of the IBC. The February 2004 “Report on the Present State of the Maintenance of the United States and Canada Boundary and Recommendations for the Future” details the state of the boundary and the steps necessary for the IBC to meet the performance goal.

The Treaty of 1925 requires the maintenance of an “effective” boundary line between the United States and Canada. The Treaty specifies that, to be “effective”, the boundary line must be accurately delineated and marked with stable identifying monuments. This is accomplished on land by clearing a 20-foot wide line-of-sight (i.e., “vista”) from one boundary monument to the next along the entire 5,525 U.S.-Canadian mile boundary. The IBC maintains more than 5,500 land boundary monuments and more than 2,800 reference monuments which are used to locate the water boundary. In addition, the IBC regulates construction crossing the boundary and provides boundary-specific positional and cartographic data to the public and private sectors. The IBC appropriation provides funds to implement U.S. obligations under the Treaty, thereby maintaining and preserving an effective boundary line between the two countries that ensures the sovereignty of each nation over its territory by clearly establishing where one’s rights and responsibilities end and the other’s begin, thus virtually eliminating the potential for serious and costly boundary disputes.

Program Description

Although the boundary was cleared, surveyed and marked years ago, a cyclical program of maintenance is required to sustain an effective boundary line. The necessity of continuous maintenance is due to the deterioration and destruction of boundary monuments and to brush and timber overgrowth obstructing the 20-foot wide vista. Generally, the boundary was on a 15-year maintenance cycle, but the IBC estimates that over the last 15 years the maintenance cycle has fallen behind by 8 years. This deterioration in the cycle was due in part to the discontinuation of the use of herbicides. Additionally, increased security issues along the boundary in recent years, has caused the IBC to alter project priorities to accelerate the maintenance cycle in high traffic areas.

Last year the IBC began to resurvey and convert all North American Datum 27 (NAD27) map coordinates that currently define the boundary to NAD 83 positions.

Performance

Maintaining an “effective” boundary is vitally important for the national interest. The IBC proposes to track performance by comparing the number of miles along the border maintained (vista clearing and monument maintenance) during each fiscal year with the number of miles targeted for that year, to gauge efficiency by comparing performance data with operational costs, and to document the implementation and results of efficiency improvements.

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Justification of Request

The FY 2010 request of \$2,385,000 will continue to fund the IBC operations and the following seven boundary maintenance projects:

- Reclearing and Monumentation 141st Meridian (64 miles) (Alaska-Yukon) (\$520,000)
- Vista clearing Southwest and South Line (42 miles) (Maine-New Brunswick) (\$175,000)
- GPS and Monumentation (Southeast Alaska-British Columbia) (\$220,000)
- Vista Clearing 49th Parallel-(40 miles) (Minnesota-Manitoba)(\$175,000)
- Clean Paint and Repair Monuments 49th Parallel (Montana-North Dakota) (150 miles) (\$190,000)
- Clear 3 miles Glacier Park (Montana-Alberta) (\$20,000)
- Clean Paint and Reclear Ranges Passamoquoddy Bay (Maine-New Brunswick) (\$40,000)

Funding will also continue to support a third year of a five-year remapping project for the entire boundary as well as the implementation of a Geographical Information System.

A well-marked and maintained boundary also enables Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to accomplish their duties more effectively. It also ensures that persons arriving at the boundary anywhere along its length will know which country they are in and therefore, what laws they are under. An ambiguous boundary line would needlessly complicate and disrupt the business of government and private industry as well as the lives of the people living and working along it.

Funds by Program Activity

(\$ in thousands)

Activities	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
International Boundary Commission	1,518	1,970	2,385	415
Equipment Lifecycle Program	20	200	50	(150)
Field Campaigns	546	724	1,340	616
IBC - Operations	902	946	995	49
Mapping / Survey Projects	50	100	0	(100)
Total	1,518	1,970	2,385	415

Funds by Object Class

(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
1100 Personnel Compensation	530	554	582	28
1200 Personnel Benefits	158	166	177	11
2100 Travel & Trans of Persons	91	90	96	6
2300 Rents, Comm & Utilities	73	81	85	4
2500 Other Services	596	774	1,140	366
2600 Supplies and Materials	50	55	55	0
3100 Personal Property	20	250	250	0
Total	1,518	1,970	2,385	415